

The Art of Music

Why do we listen to music? Do we gain anything from it or it is just purely for auditory aesthetic pleasure? Does the type of music we listen to affect these answers? What makes us drawn to one artist/genre more than another? These are all things I hope to find out through this project. This topic is significant to me right now because I have almost always had a strong connection with music. Ever since middle school, I have been listening to music pretty much everyday for many different reasons, whether it be to make the time pass by on any commutes I have to endure, doing simple tasks such as homework or cooking, changing my mood, or even to help me fall asleep sometimes. But that's just my connection with music. What is everyone elses?

I listen to a variety of genres but there are some that I either never or very really cross into. I don't fully know why except for it's just not my thing, but do others have a clearer reason? Same thing for the converse. While I listen to different genres, pop and R&B are my top two. Why those two specifically? I actually do have an answer for this but here is not the place so to keep it simple, because I love singing and those two tend to be very vocal heavy. And because there's so many different types of music and so many people that listen to them, there's a lot of different answers to these questions.

What even is music? That answer can also have a lot of differentiation depending on who you ask. Is it the instrumentals? Well by definition, yes, but acapella is still music and there are no instruments so how is that music and not just poetry. And while I believe lyrics are just poetry, does that mean all poems are music? Or is it a all squares are rectangles but not vice versa type of thing? Is it different because we tend to hit notes while singing but if that's true then how is rap classified as music? These are questions I've never even thought about until now and now all these questions are flowing like, well like lyrics of a song. (See what I did there?)

As someone who is smack dab in the middle of the Gen Z age range, I feel like music has a different experience for me as compared to others in older or younger generations. Or are there? Because of this, I want to gather research from Boomers, Millennials and Zoomers, or some age range of that sort. With technological advances through these decades, surely the answers will be different in that aspect but the style of music has also taken a big shift. "They don't make music like they used to!" Does our taste adapt to these evolutions or do we tend to keep the same taste and just listen to the music from our perspective generation? Why or why not?

To learn as much as possible, I'm going to be interviewing family members from the three generations mentioned above. My grandmother, who's in the later half of baby boomers, my mom who's right in the end of gen X so I'm counting her for Millenials, and my brother, who's only four years younger than me but that really does make a big difference. Aside from being in different generations, I also want to ask these people because kids tend to listen to the music their parents play in their car and choosing a familial lineage like this can show how music taste develops from what we listen to as kids and how much we deviate from our parents.

What I hope to learn most from this project between now and May is exactly how different music impacts people. What function does music have in our lives? What would life be like without it? It's common knowledge how music has impacted groups of people throughout history and can bring community, but I want to do a deep dive on a more individual and personal level. Are these differences in our human nature or something we've evolved as music became more mainstream and accessible? Okay maybe that last one is a bit much for this project but it is something I'd like to know.